Ford Hit On Access To Files

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By David C. Martin
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President Ford has been more reluctant to turn over files from the Nixon administration than from the Kennedy administration, the chairman of the Senate intelligence committee said yesterday.

"It is quite wrong," said Chairman Frank Church (D-Idaho). "The committee must insist on equal treatment."

At the same time, presidential counsel Philip W. Buchen indicated that it could be months before the White House can reply to committee subpoenas seeking former President Nixon's tapes and documents relating to Chile and to domestic intelligence gathering.

Church spoke with reporters after a two-hour meeting with Buchen and General Services Administrator Arthur F. Sampson. The White House, Church said, is reserving for itself the right to determine the relevance of Nixon tapes and papers which might shed light on the extent of Central Intelligence Agency involvement in a 1970 kidnaping attempt which resulted in the death of the head of Chile's army.

When the committee sought documents relating to alleged Kennedy administration efforts to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, committee investigators were allowed to determine for themselves which documents were relevant, Church said.

"I would hope that President Ford would reconsider his position," Church said, adding that the committee

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would meet again with Buchen next week.

A White House spokesman, in response to Church's charges of obstruction, said the administration—not Congress—would be the judge of what material from the Nixon era would be turned over to the Senate committee.

Deputy White House press secretary Jack Hushen said the committee had been refused some documents that were regarded as "not relevant" to the Chile kidnapping, United Press International reported.

The committee has agreed to extend the deadline on its subpoenas, which fell due yesterday, until the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia can rule on whether the White House has the authority to search the Nixon files. The files are the subject of a complex legal battle to determine whether they are owned by the government or by Nixon.

Buchen asid Mr. Ford "is perfectly willing to have a search of the files assuming it's reasonably possible." But Buchen warned that the Nixon files were not indexed and that he had no way of knowing "whether it will take a month or seven months" to find the documents sought by the committee.